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JANUARY 10, 2011

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By David Lewis. Photos by James Whitehead. Art by John A. Smith. Photo by John A. Smith.

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HAVANA FANTASIA At Cuba's film festival, Brian D. Johnson revels in a vibrant culture.

"We may not approve of the man our daughter chooses to marry, but do we outlaw this marriage? No, it's her choice. Why is gay marriage any different?" —David Dempsey, Peterborough, Ont.

Da Vinci's inquest

Readers to finish *Da Vinci* for puzzling the only *Da Vinci Code* in its place ("Cracking the Da Vinci Code," Cover, Dec. 20). It's bad enough for a society to allow the good name of an institution cherished by millions, such as the Catholic Church, to be tarnished with impunity under the desk of a work of fiction or in the name of art. But to allow someone to do the damage with third-rate writing, to present fiction as truth and to walk away with millions of dollars in his pocket, is simply pathetic.

David Gilman, Montreal

Brian Balthus's conclusion is too fine-tuned. *The Da Vinci Code* is so widely popular because of the convergence of two very broadly based forces. It is a jolly good whodunit and addresses a yearning in many modern spiritual seekers: there must be another choice in Christianity today between believing in a literal, definitive Bible—which many cannot or will not do—or not believing at all.

Jim Robertson, Calgary

I just read your article on *The Da Vinci Code* and couldn't help but notice that it includes a picture of two young women as they admire the shroud in Peter's Church of St. Stephen. If you look carefully at the start of the woman on the right, you can clearly see the face of Jesus (or perhaps it's Mary, or maybe even St. Stephen himself). No kidding, have a look.

Ken Shing, Vancouver, B.C.

I don't think that Brian Balthus understands that *The Da Vinci Code* is a work of fiction. It is to be read and enjoyed, as escape, just like a movie. He seems pretty worked up over something that is meant to be entertainment.

Don Whalen, Fredericton

I was greatly saddened to read Brian Balthus remark that "Teffelov and Cartholicean, with its centuries-old roots in the English-speaking world, remains among the most



solemnized of prejudices." If the book was written to promote prejudice against Catholics, then I am sorry I bought it. I simply thought it was an engaging novel from a unique imagination. Whichever its purpose, the Catholic Church has survived 2000 years, and I am sure it will survive *The Da Vinci Code*.

Matthew Fisher, pastoral secretary, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Gloucester, Ont.

Mr. money's worth

We are shocked that you would run the "Canadian-made chocolate" article (*Money's Worth*, Dec. 13) without doing your homework. We live in New Brunswick where Ganong Chocolates makes its home, and

we know about the great variety of product that is available here beyond the "sugared" purple box you wrote about so dismissively. Since this inexpensive Ganong product at \$5.99 was being compared with Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia examples from \$21.99 to \$42 a box, why didn't your writers take the time to explore the Ganong Chocolate Shoppes in the towns of St. Stephen and St. Andrews, where a customer can make selections from as wide an array of high-end product as we have seen in any major city.

Dr. and Mrs. David Gidley, Saint John, N.B.

Mutual (funds) admiration society

In his Dec. 13 column, "Beware funds bearing gifts", Steve Mach presents a wholly negative view of the mutual fund industry that is far removed from reality. The fact is that mutual funds deliver excellent value to Canadians. They remain the most affordable way for investors to build diversified, professionally managed portfolios. All the recent press about mutual funds only demonstrates that mutual funds offer more disclosure about their costs, objectives, operations and comparative performance than any other investment. As well, mutual funds offer liquidity in they can be sold in whole or in part on any business day, unlike GICs or other fixed-term investments.

Tom Hockin, President and CEO, Investment Funds Institute of Canada, Toronto

Avoiding debtors' prison

It is old-fashioned to live within one's means, particularly when the means are limited ("Up deep in debt," *Potential Personal*, Dec. 6). And it is kind when your teenagers are wearing last year's clothes or you have to pass up an invitation to join friends at expensive restaurants. Yet my family feels a deep satisfaction in knowing that we can meet our needs as what we earn and by making sure that our needs are ours and not imposed on us by others.

Barbie Aida, Calgary

Unsung heroes

I would like to thank you for your article about troubled youth ("A tale of...succeeding," *Over to You*, Dec. 13). As a youth, I am tired of being bombarded with the latest on youth crime, violence in schools and how teen culture is obsessed with sex, drugs and, of course, lack of respect for authority. Every

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THE MAIL



On same-sex marriage, one reader says: "Let the people decide. A referendum is in order."

October, my school children cannot grieve for the deity in our country, and then, in December, we donate gifts and money to poor families so their children can feel the magic of Christmas. We have various clubs such as Knights Fighting Cancer (for cancer patients and their families) get through the stressful time. You will never see our own creative efforts on the cover of a magazine, but that does not mean they don't exist. Your article helped change the bias and the stereotype of youth in our community.

Kathryn Leger, Kitchener

The marrying kind

It distresses me that when the government parliamentize a precedent setting decision on its own, it must to the Supreme Court to make the decision for it ("The same-sex debate heats Parliament's way," Up front, Dec. 26). It is this kind of political out-pour by our elected representatives that I find diverting.

Ian McEwen,
Newmarket, Ont.

"As a youth, I am tired of being bombarded with how teen culture is obsessed with sex and drugs"

I do not approve of same-sex marriage, but I fully approve of same-sex couples that give guys and lesbians the same rights and obligations. Having had the courage to come out and declare themselves, why are they not demanding to have their own institution with a name chosen by them and a vocabulary and ceremony suited to their situation with the same status as marriage?

John Bock, St. Petersburg, Fla.

We should celebrate and acknowledge gay and lesbian alliances part in we do heterosexual alliances. A stable relationship is infinitely preferable for the stability of our society.

Daphne Stuckard, Burnaby, B.C.

Without warning

A health news in your Dec. 13 issue ("Stressful week," Up front) incorrectly states that one million Canadians have suffered panic attacks. In fact, five million Canadians have suffered panic attacks, with an average of one panic attack per year. The one million figure refers to the number of Canadians who have suffered the even more serious panic disorders, which are recurrent, unprovoked panic attacks.

Patricia's Marriage Matters, Health Services Division,
Statistics Canada, Ottawa

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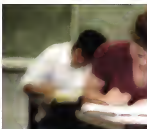
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MACLEAN'S BEHIND THE SCENES



AT SCHOOL, WITH MACLEAN'S

As kids head back to school for the second semester, many of them will be turning to the magazine you hold in your hands. Maclean's has been a classroom resource for over 20 years, with a loyal following among teachers, many of whom review their in-class Program subscriptions annually.

The program is a cross-curricular educational package based on Maclean's editorial content, for use in Social Studies, English, and ELA courses. The magazine is the primary text and it comes with teaching support materials, including prepared lesson plans, activities and quizzes on articles in each issue.

"My students love the current, in-depth analysis of recent events," says Jonathan Dyck, a grade 12 teacher at Lakeside Collegiate in Markham. "The backgrounders are an excellent resource."

Dyck is among 600 teachers at schools across Canada who use the In-Class Program to enrich their course curricula and develop students' reading, writing and critical thinking skills, notes program manager Melissa Kachurak. "Teachers appreciate the quality and currency of the materials and the Canadian content," she says, adding that each year about 36,000 new grade 9 to first-year university-level students subscribe to the program.

Rod Jamieson, a grade 10 teacher at Parkview Academy in Alberta, agrees. "A Canadian perspective is more important than ever. So much news is non-Canadian that without Maclean's the students often wouldn't know there are two sides to the story."

For more information on the In-Class Program, log on to www.macleaninclass.com or call 1.800.468.1955.

Help shape what's inside Maclean's by registering as a member of the Maclean's Advisory Panel at www.macleans.ca/vp. For more information about this article, contact behindthescenes@maclean.ca.

UPFRONT

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Mad cow | Will Canada's cattle get to cross the border?

Canadian customs can be forgiven for thinking their industry cursed. On Dec. 29, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that a devastating 19-month ban on live Canadian cattle would likely be lifted March 3, pending review by the U.S. Congress. Just a few hours later, the other hoof dropped: The Canadian Food Inspection Agency reported that according to preliminary screening tests, a 10-year-old dairy cow from Alberta had tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease. If those findings prove definitive, it would be the third time a Canadian-born cow tested positive for BSE since May 10, 1989, when the U.S. ban first took effect.

Canadian officials were quick to say there is no risk to consumers from this latest case because the animal never entered the food chain and there is no evidence mad cow disease can be transmitted in milk. They also pointed out that the U.S. stands to reopen the border only to cattle under 30 months of age, animals considered at little risk of contracting BSE. But while regulators

Canadian were cheering, until a possible new case of mad cow complicated the U.S. proposal to open its doors

from both countries raised the same solid the ban will go ahead—unless U.S. officials know of the suspicious Canadian cow before they trade their written consent. Many Canadian customs are concerned that potential members of Congress could still keep the border closed. Says Rod Scriver of Wild Rose Agricultural Products near Edmonton: "The worry is, people will be swayed by emotional, fear-mongering arguments."

For Canadian producers, it's all overly familiar: The U.S. ban on live cattle, which has cost the Canadian industry an estimated \$5 billion in revenue, was supposed to be lifted in early 2004. These hopes were dented when an Alberta-born Holstein in Washington was tested positive for BSE on Dec. 23, 2003. Like many others, Scriver now has a personal stake in dealing with the issue. "I hope it's the best," he says, "and progress for the worst."

BRAND BURGESS

Quote of the week | "The strange thing is we have not recorded any dead animals. No elephants are dead, not even a rabbit."

Si Lanka wildlife official R. G. RATNAPARKI on the total waves that swept away so many human lives

ScoreCard



WIZARDS

New Harry Potter book tops Amazon.com's bestseller list—six months before release. In age when retail outlets plant bombs for the unsuspecting, and disasters abound, such craving for the intricacies of magical wizardry is rare.



SALINAS

Local church has John Steinbeck's California background closing its libraries. Parents say great deal would be spoiled. Maybe not. A true writer, he found books, but hated reading them. If alive he'd likely have his order already as for new Harry Potter.



LOWERED LEAF

Leafy New Zealand flag now has extra coming in value of rotated Canadian symbol on the flag is low as cost drops. Great deal to be had for U.S. backpackers wanting to travel recognize.



TOGO'S BANTU

Canada tonight gets conditional clearance for tobacco survey panels. Says "what happened that night in March is not what I am." Valued 100 million dollars, who suffered three broken vertebrae and a concussion. Don't say the same.

Mansbridge on the Record



BEAUTY AT 30,000 FEET

You get an exhilarating sense of this vast country from high up in the air

IN ONE OF my lives before broadcast journalism, winter was truly something to be braced for, perhaps because there was so much of it. I lived in Churchill, Man., and that meant the snow didn't leave 101 June, the nights were long and frigid, and the snow drifted high. I loaded regional and odd routes for one of the great airline regional airlines of our past—Transair. The bulk of our business wasn't the flights north to exotic weekend getaway locations such as Winnipeg, but into the far North, the supply flights into the central and High Arctic.

The Churchill-based Transair family was small but rugged, and intensely dedicated—especially the pilot. I can remember more than a few Sunday nights when a party was interrupted by a call from some northern community in desperate need of a medical evacuation. There could be a howling blizzard outside, and yet pilots who didn't have on headsets out to the airport and fired up their DC-3 for a mercy flight to some remote destination. I don't remember doing being a part of the rescue—nor that it wasn't needed, just that methods weren't nearly so sophisticated as they are now. (I'm wrong there in a flight where the deserting pilot was so smooth, it took less time than the security check—and doesn't that say something about how times have changed?)

But those early Transair days did something else to me—they concerned my relationship with flying. I find it such a peaceful way to spend a few hours—phones ringing, no email beeping, no sudden decisions to make. And the view. How

passengers must think I'm anti-social because I spend so much time looking out the window. It was on one of those late-afternoon trips into the High Arctic when I got hooked—there I was flying toward Mount Ray and its Denner Early Warning station. I turned out of looking outside at the expected endless landscape of tundra and packed ice, I found myself captivated by spectacular mountain ranges where it would take a season to hike and ever climbed.

I've been pretty lucky in the last while. While most Canadians hunker down in year's end, biding out for the holidays and staying fairly close to home, I've been on the road, using the country as winter sustenance. Recently, I've been to Windsor, Ont., Halifax, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal, Charlottetown and, of course, Toronto.

While staring out of aircraft windows, I am sometimes busy. I count sections over the plains, trying to guess farm sizes; they seem to have grown disproportionately over the years as family farms keep getting smaller. I judge a city's growth by the addition of new shopping centres—actually these days it's more big-box malls. But when I'm looking far for something reassuring, there's one nighttime gaze that always fits the bill—looking down on hockey rinks lit up in communities big and small, and the way figures who have chosen the outdoors over the arena to play their winter game. There are few nights more Canadian than this.

Those Transair days are far behind me now, but I still find it more than a little exhilarating to watch from 30,000 feet as the country, with all its differences and similarities, challenges and accomplishments, spreads out below.

Come on 2005, bring it on. We're ready.

Peter Mansbridge is Chief Correspondent of CBC Television News and Author of *The National*. You can reach him at peterm@cbc.ca.

FaceTime

Crossing the line: A veteran NHLer, tough guy with 25 years and 3,281 penalty minutes—under his belt, Los Angeles Sabres defenceman Ray also felt a low blow coming. Ray, 36, flashed last season with the Sabres. Senators after spending most of it as a TV commentator last year he was surprised by more other than Bob Goodenow, head of the National Hockey League Players' Association, he would still be eligible for lockout compensation.



season (the maximum is \$100,000 a month). Also, that was before he was quoted in an Ottawa newspaper saying, "I'll cross the line in a second" shortly after. Ray was told by the NHLA he would not be in the fund, he's now filed a lawsuit against the union in a New York state court.



Cause célèbre She's suing now, suffering from dementia, and she admits a church group was playing the role on last Detroit episode. But the star-writer's own story who jumped started the American civil rights movement nearly 50 years ago when she refused to



Beyond the call is the Moon or Goodwin? A 55-year-old Virginia woman gave birth to her own grandchild in—triplets, in fact.

two boys and a girl. The Galt carried the babies for daughter, Camille Hammond, a doctor, after Hammond was unable to conceive. Galt underwent hormone treatments to turn back her biological clock and was implanted with three test-tube embryos from Hammond and her husband. All were born healthy, but two months premature.

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WORLD

IRAQ With elections only weeks away, insurgent attacks in Iraq continued to escalate. In one ambush, Iraqi security forces were lured to a house on a tip, only to find it rigged with explosives. Nearly 30 police and civilians died in the blast, part of a day in which 54 Iraqis were killed by militants. The terror campaign seemed to be having an effect: The largest political party representing Iraq's Sunni minority pulled out of the election, a blow to the vote's credibility.

TERROR FRONT A new audiotape from Osama bin Laden urged Iraqis to boycott the Jan. 30 election and declared Jordan-Iraqi terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi to be al Qaeda's "emir" in the Iraq theatre. At the same time, Washington accused Syria of acting as a spring ground for anti-U.S. militants in the region, a charge Damascus denied. And militant bombers attacked two symbolic sites in Saudi Arabia—the Ministry of the Interior offices in Riyadh and a maining center for anti-terrorist police.

TERROR JET The Washington Post reported that an executive jet, registered as a "ghost company" in the U.S. without identifiable owners, routinely whisked terror suspects from U.S. military bases to countries that use torture. The newspaper's investigation suggested the jet is run by the CIA, which has used dummy companies in the past.

BY PERIKANG KONGKAE



SPACE A couple of hungry associates aboard the International Space Station, Russia's Shtirak Shupor and Leroy Chase from the U.S., ate their way through too much of a stockpile of food intended to last for months, necessitating a resupplying by an unmanned spaceship on Christmas Day. With the U.S. space shuttle program on hold, Russia has been picking up the cost of servicing the ISS, but has now warned the

DOORS SHUT

For weeks Iraqis have lined up at border crossings, staying in shelters like this one at a church in Saddam, K.I., trying to find last month's refugee changes. Until now, about 11,000 people have sought asylum in "greenhouse" camps, each with 100 to 200 people (or more) in each tent. The other way to go the other way.) This will all change. Under new rules in both countries, most new refugees will be processed only when they arrive. Officials say it will reduce asylum seekers, but not confirmed it will only lead to more people struggling.

U.S. there will be no more free rides. Beginning in 2005 it will charge for bringing U.S. immigrants to the station.

NASA, meanwhile, rolled out a sleek new fuel tank for its shuttles, designed to eliminate the resulting risk that blew off and doomed the Columbia and its seven crew members in they were attempting to return to Earth in February 2005.

PENSION HEIST According to police, a massive bank heist in Northern Ireland just before Christmas may have been pulled off by the IRA, looking to build themselves a pension fund now that the organization is pledging to give up weapons. In a daring robbery, thieves made off with the equivalent of \$55 million. The central bank is threatening to render the bank useless by taking important denominations of notes out of circulation.

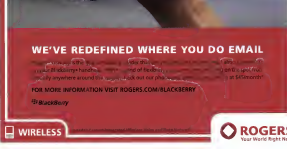
TAMPERING WITH HISTORY Israeli police filed felony charges against three antiquities dealers and a collector, accusing them of forging several important biblical artifacts including the ossuary—a limestone burial box—said to have contained the remains of Jesus's brother James. The box was on display at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum just over two years ago.



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The broken Iditarod freighter Selkirk, 1941, is seen sinking off an Alaskan wildlife sanctuary in the Bering Sea. Six crew died in last month's wreck. But the environmental impact is only now being felt: 1.5 million liters of oil spilled into the pristine waters, eight times what was first thought.



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WACJIANZ // JANUARY 15, 2006 17

Mary Janigan | ON THE ISSUES



ANOTHER BROKEN PROMISE

A pledge to add 5,000 troops shows the limits of Canada's military capacity

IT WAS A VISIONARY election now, curiously crafted to appeal to our pride and idealism. And it has become the perfect, and scathing, of the vast gap between what we say and what we can actually do on the international stage. Ottawa, promising the Liberal platform, would increase its armed forces by 5,000 personnel, creating a new brigade and greatly enhancing Canada's capacity for peace support. "A special peace brigade sounded so imaginative and, more importantly, it echoed the Times' glowing views."

The difference was in the details. Former defence minister David Price had planned to ask cabinet after the election to approve the extra troops. But, under any, formation of a separate brigade for peacekeeping was never to him and the defence establishment. Who would own them? Where was the equipment for them and the housing? For that matter, where was the money going to come from? The recent \$1.3-billion budget cut badly impacted the current 60,000-member regular force. Martin's advisers brushed aside those questions by late August, military leaders were quietly insisting that the new defence minister had assured them this they would get the funds.

Then the tale began to repeat. By early

“

In a strange way, it's good this military has not yet recruited the troops—because the Liberals have not produced a defence policy

added to three existing army brigades on three bases across the nation.

Don't hold your breath. Early last month, the vice-chief of the defence staff, Vice Admiral Ron Black, told the Senate security committee that he has not received the money to hire those troops. That would mean, he hoped, with the coming 2005-2006 budget. Anyway, once he got the funds, it would take five years to add them all. In carefully blind language, he hinted about the need for sensors and navigators and equipment and housing; thus, all of those problems that many analysts had raved about during the election. "I was shocked," says Liberal Senator Colin Kenny, the committee's chairman. "The Second World War would have been over by the time they're hired. This is a time not to show how far our defence capability has eroded."

In a strange way, it's good the military has not yet recruited the troops—because the Liberals have not produced a defence policy. Our armed forces are supposed to play domestic, continental and international roles. But what are they, exactly? How long should we be able to sustain troops in the field? Most defence experts say we should have a 75,000-member force to be truly effective. Is that our goal—when even 50,000 more sounds like a stretch?

It's difficult to know where we are going and why we are going there if the government has not told the forces about the direction. "Warms," says Alan Pellier, executive director of the Conference of Defence Associations, a military advocates group. "Paul Martin wants to make a name for himself in foreign policy. But if you do not have credible military forces, you will not go anywhere." He's right. The signs of the peacekeeping brigade is really a sadly contemporary tale about dreams and realities. And, alas, political priorities. ☐

Mary Janigan is a political and military writer. mjanigan@madmax.net, 503.605.6001

Passages

BRIEF At 56, Montreal native Paul Mitzi-er lied about his age and spent 15 months on the front lines in Belgium and France, transporting ammunition, before his death at reported his true age to authorities. He was misassigned to Boys' Brigade in England for the rest of the First World War. Mitzi-er died in Ottawa in 1994.

AWARDED Calgary journalist Kyle Sheffelt, who went on a noble inquiry to take home Canada's first gold medal at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, was voted Canada's most colorful of the year by sports editors and broad-casters. Sheffelt, 22, who has been turning outwards since he was three, is the only Canadian to have won an Olympic medal for artistic gymnastics.



ENGAGED Olympic skating brought them love and Olympic gold, not necessarily in that order. Now comes marriage. Canadian sweethearts June Sale and David Pelletier, who have been skating together for almost 30 years, now professionally become engaged on Christmas Eve. They plan to tie the knot around this time next year.

DIED Viewed as one of "the dark ladies of American civilisation" for her often controversial take on modernity, Susan Sontag was that rare intellectual who took up culture seriously. The New York-born author of *Flow of Love and Other Essays* on everything from illness to photography died from complications of leukemia. She was 71.



DIED Jerry Orbach, the actor who, for 12 seasons, played Lemmy Broom, the tough, wisecracking cop on NBC's *Lone Star & Order*, died of New York after a very brief bout with prostate cancer. Born in the Bronx, Orbach started acting in 16 and began his career in Broadway musicals. He was 69.

THE MACLEAN'S INTERVIEW



Middle East | JIM TORCZYNER, PEACE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

'PEOPLE TALKING ACROSS CHECKPOINTS'

McGILL UNIVERSITY'S Middle East Program in Civil Society and Peace Building has a big name, a small budget—and a strong influence on the region. Launched in 1997, it trains Palestinian, Israeli and Jordanian social workers in Montreal—on the condition that, after they get their degree, they collaborate on helping the region's poorest residents. The goal: a network of people, usually divided by violence, working on common problems. Funded largely by the Canadian International Development Agency, the program also regularly brings together administrators of universities and non-governmental organizations serving the three communities—groups that otherwise rarely talk. Jim Torczyner, the program's founding director, travels often to the Middle East. As the Jan. 9 election of a new Palestinian leader nears, he finds a fresh openness to ending the hostilities.

Do you think there will be a better chance for peace after the Palestinian vote?

Much better. Whenever one thinks of the late chairman Arafat, it was clear nothing could happen while he was around. The election will give legitimacy to whoever

takes over and provide an opportunity to create a new reality. On the ground, in Jordan, Israel or Palestine, people are fed up with the bloodshed; they want to live normal lives. We've already begun to see more accommodation from both sides.

Your program trains aid workers. Why do you call it a peace program?

The crisis in the Middle East is not primarily a religious conflict, but essentially of both faiths have found common cause in painting it that way. The people who seek tolerance and moderation have never worked together. We give them an opportunity to do that.

For instance?

If you're an Arab in East Jerusalem, it can take you up to a year to obtain social security. Elsewhere in Israel, it's one month. Now, our centers in the two sectors have mounted a joint campaign for equal rights. Jews and Arabs addressing the Knesset together for equal rights for Arabs—it was unprecedented. Also, last summer we organized volunteers in Palestine and Jordan to visit our centres in Israel and Gaza. In Jerusalem they saw 200 families—Jews and Arabs—managing a food co-op together.

That's encouraging, but does it foster peace?

Peace will come from above the heads of politicians when people on both sides realize they have the same needs, the same rights, and the same problems getting those rights recognized. When that kind of direct contact from the grassroots, with people talking to each other across borders and checkpoints, we have a basis for normal relations. For people who have a vested interest in the ongoing conflict, I don't think our program is on their radar. But if opponents of peace understood the power of organizing from the grassroots around common causes, we would be.

As a Jew travelling extensively in the region, do you ever feel threatened?

Never. I feel more threatened by the occasional harmful tip from people who have taken the extremists' view here in Canada. I was in Jordan last summer. I met everyone, including those you are supposed to be afraid of. We never receive threats from them.

Is Canada doing enough for peace there?

We don't fit in either camp, but we've advanced clear principles about democracy, civil society and peace-building that we can help implement on the ground. Canada has crafted a unique role, and commands respect across the board. **DENISE ALBIN**

BEYOND WORDS

Tens of thousands die after tsunamis devastate Southeast Asia. The sheer scope of disaster left the rest of the world facing a crucial question: how best to help?

The scene
in Banda Aceh,
Indonesia.
That country
alone reported
almost 16,000
people killed.

ON THE ASSEMBLY line of tragedy that was the Sri Lankan coast last week, residents of Kalmunai were enduring a special kind of hell. As if the near obliteration of their seaside village wasn't enough, survivors returned to their ruined towns to find older, long-buried human remains mixed among the recently discovered—and exposed—fishing boats, tanks, collapsed houses and pinned beneath shattered chunks of wharf. "The town's burial grounds are all over the coast," explains 39-year-old Jeffrey Uthumalabe, a Tamil resident moved in Sattaram. Without great warning, he says, they discovered corpses of people who had been laid to rest generations ago, throwing all the bodies onto higher ground. "Now," he says, "they have to be sorted out."

Among the newly dead, a staggering 31 members of Uthumalabe's extended family, who were caught unaware as the earth quake-driven surge smashed into the seaside house, located just a few meters from the shoreline. His brother, mother and father, who lived in a different house, were able to escape. "But my mother wasn't so lucky," he says. "She knows that if she opens a door, there's a good chance there'll be a body behind it."

AFTER

initially offering only token amounts, western governments are opening up their treasuries

Such is the nature of the calamity unfolding in South Asia, just when the horror reaches its most reprehensible proportions, life delivers more, making prospects of recovery seem like a distant dream. The disaster, caused by a 9-magnitude earthquake centered in the southeast Indian Ocean, already counts as one of the worst in history, dwarfing any others known to have been caused by tsunamis. The killer waves battered a wide area that included the south shore of India, Myanmar, even the east coast of Africa. At week's end, the death toll was predicted to surpass 125,000 (not worse, by comparison, was a series of waves that struck Portugal after an earthquake in 1755, killing an estimated 60,000). Some 80,000 were lost in Indonesia along with another 27,300 in Sri Lanka and 2,940 in India. In eastern vacationing in Thailand's sun-drenched



Thailand's Phi Phi island (above) suffered a direct hit from inside a beach resort in Penang, Malaysia, viewed from a safe vantage point.



MIRACLES IN A TIME OF TRAGEDY

On Dec. 23, Mark Nardoni arrived in Thailand for what he hoped would be the trip of a lifetime. Little did he know how true that would be. At the time the business mogul, Vancouver, vice-president of sales and marketing for Autodesk, once-based high-tech company serving the aerospace industry, was skipping over the southern town of Ao Nang (he sent Maclean's his story).

ALL NIGHT I felt that great sense of urgency that I needed to get to sleep as early as possible. Normally I try to sleep in when I'm dealing with jet lag, but this time I set the alarm. I brought it on a



when before leaving Canada for \$19 a.m.—11 p.m. hours before the earthquake. I was on the water a little after 8. I soon decided I needed another tube of sunscreen. I was annoyed, but decided to head out at a water-lounge beach and rock climbing centre called Krabi Beach. The decision probably saved my life.

When I got there, I saw what looked like giant waves around four kilometres offshore. I shook my head and assumed I must be imagining things. Then the entire bay suddenly changed of water with a loud noise. I knew what was about to happen—I'd studied the phenomenon of tsunamis and have always been aware of the danger whenever I have travelled near the ocean. I looked for an escape route and saw a road leading up a hill. Confidently could get away if necessary, I then went back to the beach with my waterproof camera.

A wall of water around five metres high was moving up the bay. A motor cruiser maybe 150 km offshore went straight up in the air as the wave. Four boats used to shuttle tourists were left in the bay. About 50 people jumped out onto the exposed sea bottom and ran for safety as the wave destroyed those vessels. A few seconds later it hit them and reached into buildings as everyone ran up the hill. Then the bay was once again sucked dry. Soon after, a second and larger wave arrived and destroyed more buildings on the beach. After this, several smaller waves hit, and over the next eight hours the bay repeatedly drained and then refilled, each cycle more deadly than the last.

About an hour after the first wave, a group of hikers appeared along the exposed rocks. The bay had just emptied again, and people were screaming at them to run, assuming another huge wave would come. The hikers around a kayak who had been out with his family and was badly scraped up. He told me that when the sea went out, his group did not have a few feet of water to float on, but were helpless as the wave came in. He survived, but didn't know where his family was. Three hours later, a second member of his party arrived back at home, somehow the woman

had managed to swim ashore to safety. But the waves had torn off her clothes and she had a deep slash in her thigh. Now she managed to avoid bleeding to death while waiting for a sharp coral seemed downright miraculous. I located a passenger from Cairns, Alta-Morales—who had ended to be. The woman told me she had managed to save her mother after the first wave, but the second wave pulled them apart and her mother had drowned. Her sister was missing and presumed dead.

Around 3 p.m., I headed back to Ao Nang. My hotel was partly destroyed, but I received word that a friend I had been expecting was in town, so I went to locate her. She had been on nearby Phi Phi Island, sailing with her two children and other family and friends, but had left that morning alone on the 3 a.m. ferry; the earthquake had already happened, but there were no tsunami warnings. The ferry landed in Krabi, some five kilometres from Krabi Beach, 10 minutes later and put a few minutes before the wave hit. She was the first passenger off the boat, and got in the first aid. As in my case, she survived being caught by mere minutes.

Phi Phi Island was devastated. A huge wave destroyed the first two floors of the hotels and swept away more than 200 bungalows. The boats in the harbour were wrecked. It was impossible to get word or whether my brother's family had escaped. We found out more than 30 hours later they had left just minutes before the wave, and the tsunami passed under them harmlessly. Another miracle, in this time of terrible tragedy.

playground of Phuket survived by clinging to palm trees, while untold thousands in northern Sumatra were engulfed in their homes. Many victims had no idea what hit them.

Aid organizations and the international community know their job now—sort out corpses, bury the dead, finding homes for orphaned children. The question is when to start. “It’s just tomorrow,” says Roger Markowski, humanitarian program co-ordinator for Oxfam International, appealing from Medan, Sumatra. “Money is no longer the issue. We now have to look at the best possible means to help these people.” In parts of Indonesia, he notes, the force of the waves wiped out entire communities, killing tens of thousands and leaving still more displaced. Meisaboh, a town of 120,000 on Sumatra’s northern tip, was thought to have been obliterated, with an estimated 40,000 dead, meaning relief workers will have to start a community from scratch, as bulldozers dig mass graves nearby. “To go there,” says Markowski, a Monroeville, “you have to be very strong psychologically.”

Under the best of circumstances, getting help to the affected regions will be tough. Many communities simply lack the roads and airstrips to support a major aid effort, while other places, like northern Sri Lanka, have been riven by long-running civil wars, which have a way of turning crises into political fights. Until last Tuesday—two days after the tsunami hit—humanitarian groups and journalists were still barred from Sumatra’s northern Aceh province, where the Indonesian government has been waging a three-decade war against rebels. Aid the damage wrought by the waves, and you have an army gunning people: dozens of towns were cut off as the water wiped out roads and phone lines, so relief workers must now reach them to determine the extent of the damage. “It isn’t something like a hurricane, where people have some notice, and are able to prepare,” says Suzanne Chesse, spokeswoman for the Canadian Red Cross. “There’s what makes these crises exceptional, and the level of destruction in some countries—the death toll—is literally quite unbearable.”

If there’s good news, it’s the sudden abundance of cash to fund relief efforts. After initially offering token amounts, western governments have opened up their treasuries at the behest of the disaster-stricken. The \$123 million pledged by the international community early in the week steadily bal-



Intense looting near to the bodies in a Thai temple that became a makeshift morgue

looned in ensuing days, with Ottawa looking in \$40 million, putting a million-dollar check owed by tsunami hit countries, and promising to match dollar for dollar donations made to NGOs over and above the \$44 million. Aid organizations were swamped with donations, including some \$24 million to the Canadian Red Cross and faster answers to organizations like Oxfam, World Vision and the Salvation Army. At a Tamil Nadu radio station, children arrived with piggy banks, helping raise some \$250,000 intended for northern Sri Lanka. “We’re

not even a charity, so we can’t give money,” says Rajayanthiraj Sivasubramanian, chief executive of the Canadian Tamil Broadcasting Corporation. “So this is really remarkable.”

Politics, as ever, has reared its head where aid is concerned. Swamped systems that have stations as diverse as money in the north because it supports the Sri Lankan government, dominated by southern Sinhalese, to withhold aid money from northern Tamils. “We’ve been fighting this government 30 years,” he says. “If you give them the money, they’re going to take care of their own.” With these tensions in mind, Red Cross, Oxfam and World Vision officials say they’ve determined their portion of the aid will reach the needy to supply portable water, antibiotics and medicine. And in a positive sign, the Indonesian government declared a ceasefire with its rebels, allowing relief agencies to move into the region—a deal that could prove pivotal if true. UN officials are planning New Year’s special that may cost over US\$1.6 billion. The trace will help resource countries who double their

money is reaching those who need it most.

No amount of hands, however, can ease the anguish of families around the world waiting for word from loved ones. With families in some scores of Toronto-area Sri Lankans who worked the phones in hopes of contacting family far away, while others sought word from relatives who’d been missing in Southeast Asia. In a few cases, the news was tragic: by press time, Foreign Affairs officials had confirmed the deaths of four Canadians, with at least 185 missing or unaccounted for. Some may never be found, a federal government source acknowledged in an interview with *Maclean’s* on the health threat posed by the decaying bodies, it’s possible that remains will be buried before they are identified. “If this without to have the impression from the appearance of a body that it is a tourist, we’re told they will most likely set it aside for identification,” the source said. “But you can understand the position they’re in.”

Many of those who did survive have contacted relatives with tales ranging from the

WAVES OF MASS DESTRUCTION

ON MARCH 27, 1964, even if B.C. residents knew that neighbouring Alaska had just had a major earthquake, they likely had no idea of what was headed their way. The quake, the largest to strike North America, coincidentally the equivalent of 12,000 Hiroshima-type atomic bombs as it raked up the ocean floor. This massive change generated enormous tsunamis, which eventually spread out from Prince William Sound and across the Pacific Ocean. At 4 1/2 hours, the wave brought a series of waves that travelled 1,200 km from its epicentre 130 km southeast of Anchorage. As it sped down the west coast of Vancouver Island, it caused relatively little damage until it reached the Alaska Inlet. There, two-thirds down the island, the waves piled up in the surging narrowing and, travelling at 300 km/h up the channel, crashed into Port Alberni. The second of these waves to hit was the most damaging, costing three deaths above the high tide mark. Nobody was killed, although damage to property and industry amounted to some \$20 million (\$164 million).

Today, it’s far less likely that such a tsunami could hit B.C. by surprise. The Alaska quake led to the establishment in 1967 of the West Coast & Alaska Tsunami Warning

Center in Palmer, Alaska. British Columbia also receives timely warning about any potentially dangerous tsunamis from the Heceta-based International Tsunami Warning Center, which works closely with the US’s Intergovernmental Coordination Group.

The devastating phenomena are also the subject of more scientific study, although once known as “tidal waves,” they are unrelated to the tides, and in the 1950s the Japanese word tsunami, which means “harbour wave,” was widely adopted. The waves are generated when a disturbance of the earth’s crust—volcanoes and landslides, as well as earthquakes—displaces water. Waves formed as a result (but not unlike) created in oceanic rings.

Scientists can determine how fast a tsunami moves. In deep open water, the waves can travel at more than 800 km/h, and over large distances without great loss of energy. In 1960, a 9.5 magnitude earthquake off Chile generated a tsunami that caused destruction in Japan. As tsunamis approach

shore, they slow down, but the height of the waves increases. Still, unlike some artistic images of tsunamis, they usually come in as a rapid rise in the water level, not as giant walls of turbulent water.

Tsunamis have been generated in all of the world’s oceans and inland seas. Seismic waves from an earthquake can even create water-level oscillations, known as seiches, in

B.C.’S VULNERABLE COASTLINE



SOURCE: B.C. HISTORICAL, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, AND GEOPHYSICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

fast-moving lakes and lagoons.) Scientists have recently determined that a giant underwater sediment slide generated a huge tsunami in the Heceta region and North Sea about 12,000 years ago. In 1692, an earthquake shook Jamaica, resulting in a tsunami that wiped out the town of Port Royal. And in 2005, an offshore earthquake sent a tsunami crashing onto Newfoundland’s coast in Peninsula, killing 21.

Most tsunamis occur in the Pacific. Not only does that ocean cover more than one-third of the Earth’s surface, it is surrounded by the “ring of fire”—the most geologically active area on the planet. Part of it lies off the B.C. coast, where the eastward-moving Juan de Fuca tectonic plate meets the westward-moving North American plate. While scientists have a better understanding of the forces at work, they still have many of the questions about the next big tsunami to occur. They can only say how long it will take for any resulting tsunami to reach shore.

BARBARA WICKENS

UNDER the best of circumstances, getting aid to the affected regions will be tough. Some places lack roads.

imprisoned to the outright bizarre. Dewg and Jose Glover of Thai, B.C., read with disbelief an email sent by their 15-year-old son, Mike, who was on his way to Krabi, Thailand, where the waves tossed his room into a construction site. "The car tipped about 45 degrees onto a remaining wall with a bunch of pieces of debris sticking out of the top," Glover says in his message. "One of them punched through the car door and into my side." When the water receded, he said, the car righted itself and the roof bar snapped off—part of it still in Glover's hand. Rotten metal, it punctured only skin and bled his son. After a long wait at a nearby hospital, a doctor removed the bar and stitched him up.

Mark VanderKam of Rochester, Ont., also barely escaped the tsunami while kayaking in southern Thailand near Phi Phi Island, an area made famous by the Leonardo DiCaprio movie, *The Beach*. The 43-year-old executive of a high-tech company had seen the surge building several kilometers out to sea, yet didn't believe his eyes. By blind luck, he went ashore to buy some rumble cake and was able to escape the waves. "I must have been caught by just chance, as did my friends," he said in an email from the room area of



Some survivors got old labels, but getting it to other regions posed a challenge: pictures of unidentified men on a church bulletin board in Macau, vols.

JUST WHEN the horror seemed to reach incomprehensible proportions, fate delivered even more.

At Nang, where he was staying, "The earthquake was probably building pressure for thousands of years. It had let me go 10 min or so sooner, I would not be writing this account right now."

Such stories circulated mostly last week, powered in large part by the Web. But it was also the Internet that put faces to the tragedy, because for every close call there seemed to be a sibling bearing photos of the missing, along with family members' pleas for information on their whereabouts. These pages—littered with the smiles of the departed—served as reminders of how close a catastrophe event on the other side of the Earth can seem in an age of global travel and satellite communication. The waves wrought by last week's earthquake might have stopped on Asian shores, but their impact has registered around the world. ☐



SOME TIMELY SUGGESTIONS

Donations to help victims of the floods can be made through any of the following charitable organizations:

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3705, avenue du Port, bureau 300,
Montreal, Que., H0K 1J1
(514) 962-6886
www.alternatives.com

Canadian Centre for International Studies and Cooperation

1155 Rachel St. East,
Montreal, Que., H3M 1A3
(416) 475-2324
www.ccscc.ca

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

406-200 Smith St., 3rd Fl., Box 767,
Winnipeg, Man., R3C 3J4
(204) 465-8177
www.foodgrainsbank.ca

Canadian Lutheran World Relief

1050 Kingsbury Ave.,
Winnipeg, Man., R3P 2W5
(204) 643-2507
www.clwr.org

Canadian Red Cross Society

175 Adelaide St., Suite 100,
Ottawa, Ont., K1P 2Y2
(800) 487-3111, or contact your local
Red Cross office
www.redcross.ca

Care Canada

6 Quinlan Rd., Suite 200,
Ottawa, Ont., K2H 7X6
(800) 367-5222
www.care.ca

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

3475 Midway, P.O. Box 5076,
Stn LCO 1,
Burlington, Ont., L7R 2V8
(905) 336-3490
www.crcwc.org

Development and Peace
5033 Sherrbrook St. East,
Montreal, Que., H3N 1A3
(514) 234-9503
www.dcp.org

Milestones Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders

728 Spadina Ave., Suite 402,
Toronto, Ont., M5S 2T8
(416) 593-7503
www.milestones.org

Memorials Central Committee

134 Plaza St.,
Winnipeg, Man., R3T 5K9
(204) 523-6337
www.mcc.org

Oxfam Canada

Asian Earthquake/Yakids Relief,
215 Spadina Ave., Suite 300,
Toronto, Ont., M5T 2C7
(416) 593-6226
www.oxfam.ca

Save the Children Canada

4141 Yonge St., Suite 308,
Toronto, Ont., M2P 2A8
(416) 468-0536
www.savethechildren.ca

UNICEF Canada

2308 Yonge St., Suite 1100,
Toronto, Ont., M4S 2G6
(416) 925-3111
www.unicef.ca

World Vision Canada

1 World St.,
Mississauga, Ont., L5T 2V6
(905) 276-3226
www.worldvision.ca

Anyone with friends or relatives in affected areas can contact Canada's Emergency Operations Centre at Foreign Affairs Canada:
(800) 606-5490
(613) 944-2471

HAVE YOU got someone you know who's potentially affected by the tsunami disaster? Tell us your story at www.canadianc.ca/cover



LES X REVOLT

A new conservative wave has the old-timers worried, writes **BENOIT AUBIN**

TAKE A FEDERAL ELEPHANT, send it through a cultural minefield in Quebec, and enjoy the view as the explosion lights up a new political scene.

In this instance, the elephant was the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, the nationwide radio czar, French-speaking bastion of Quebec City, and the last time came when the CRTC tried to shut down a local radio station. Six months later, CHOI FM is throwing the towel before and Jeff Pilon, the shock jock at

the heart of the controversy, is enjoying some newfound clout. The incident has brought insight into new political landscapes that have been quietly taking shape in the Quebec capital and its outlying regions. Pilon has emerged as a key mouthpiece for a right-wing political stream, the likes of which Quebec has not seen in a long time.

The CRTC decision, which is currently

on hold pending a court appeal, was not unexpected. CHOI FM's hosts considered to have repeatedly crossed the border of what is acceptable on the airwaves.

When the CRTC decision came out, it was a shocker. "There's a political side to Pilon's message, but that was not in the national controversy," says

Communications minister, "wasn't it?" It was easy enough to miss the political subtext to the affair, because Pilon, 37, has earned himself a rep as a comedian in the seven years he's been on air, subjecting business rivals, local politicians, gays, feminists, visible minorities, and a cascade of Montreal media and showbiz stars to relentless personal attacks, abuse and ridicule. But when you see his X, or CHOI's supporters are known, you're interested by more than just the antics of a favorite on-air personality.

"There is a political side to Pilon's message, but that was not in the national controversy," says

Pridnick Tira, 37, a philosophy professor at a local CEGEP and a supporter of Pilon. "The debate focused on outrageous comments Pilon has uttered over the years, but his political views were lost on everyone, except those living in his hearing area." And those views are miles apart from the social-democratic rhetoric commonly associated with Quebec.

Pilon himself describes his X as follows: "They're an interesting animal—you can't describe them by their look or their age, though there are a lot of dark-skinned people among them. It's more an attitude. They're people who have become allergic to the sacrosanct consensus, they're fed up with the status and its complacency, they're people who have realized the years ahead will be a load of shit and that they're the ones who'll have to clean up the mess. They're people who are fed up with the Quebec view of the world, tired of living in a society where the real premier is union leader Henri Massé, not mayor who gets elected. They're a society where I can take my dog to a private clinic, but not my mom. It's the old pragmatism in the past with retrograde ideas and reformations could go away, we'd be a bit less angry already."

That's shock-jock talk all right. But in Quebec City? Not the inside is the outside of a city, a 100,000, and watch the '90 explode. But Pilon balks from the apartment of his 10-year-old son and his brother was an early Blue Quebecers MP. So, what's up?

His father, an author in his 50s who used to teach at a local junior college, says the underground Radio X's appeal is to the young. "They like what they hear, and it's not just the music," he says. "Youth has changed. It used to be that CEGEP students were liberal, and idealistic. But the kids today don't believe in truth. It's the end of utopia, that of the dream, of May 1968 in Paris, of Jean-Paul Sartre, the first time, all that."

In the protest last July, he bought \$300,000 worth of caps and T-shirts with a big black X emblem on them. Such



"We've never had a party, because, you know, the plates and bottles are empty."

Items have kept moving briskly since then, according to the station, and indeed because that in Quebec City one out of five sports an X bumper sticker—here, radio listeners are a viable force. Marketing experts can pinpoint with some accuracy who is attracted to Radio X. "We call them the nihilists, and they're quite a large group, maybe 30 per cent of the population," says Coline Biron, who works for CHOI, the polling and marketing firm in Montreal. "In a nutshell, they are people who have stopped believing, in politicians' promises, in the social contract. They're Darwinists."

you look after yourself. They're not in the here and now, and are not afraid of wild and dangerous."

The demographics may be limited, but in X provides a solid fan base for CHOI's intense package of acid rock, blaring ads, anti-establishment rants, and talk. Over the last few years, Pilon has slowly moved from a goofy Harvard Science and Sociology grad to a more serious and sophisticated. "I'm not a social media guy, I'm not a social media guy, I'm not a social media guy," he told *Maclean's* last month. Pilon is engaged at "the societal, the individual cultural level, the line on science, the unconscious discourse, the firm in the ready Montreal dialect of Placide Massé Royal,

the classroom in the Parti Québécois." And his ratings have kept climbing.

Genet's communication is, of course, a nod to Generation X, the label Canadian writer Douglas Coupland slapped on those who immediately followed the demographic bulge of the baby boomers—today's 25- to 40-year-olds. So quick, name a Gen-X political leader. Mario Dumais is 34, and his party, the right-of-centre Action démocratique du Québec, is well-known. Don't talk. Here's Dumais on his generation's view of life: "We were into the world, and we were here for a huge, expensive party. But the place and the borders are empty, all that's left is the bill for us to pay."

It's true that today's young people are more conservative and less optimistic than previous generations, says Tru. "To understand that," he adds, "you have to take a look at demographics." Québec City has stayed aloft mainly by attracting young people from the outlying regions, who go to the capital to study. "These kids see their communities as little and die-hard. Gaspé, or Lac-Saint-Jean," Tru explains. "For 30 years, to become a middle-class nation-building in Québec has dominated the agenda. But for the younger ones, anger, dissenting population is the key issue—Lac—where will the money come from to support our society's lifestyle? They don't really buy into the PQ's anthem about a shining consensus."

If this is the vision of the future germinating in Québec City, you don't have much about it in the Québec media. Most are based in Montreal—where close to a quarter of the population lives—in central Canada and where people are absorbed in missing the only French-speaking publishing giant in America, Québec City, almost totally white and francophone, is not on their radar. "It's weird to be that everything new and important come from Montreal," Tru says. "But this time, the wave is rolling from the east. It's centered, conservative, even frightened, and nobody in Montreal sees it coming."

So, the old gap between Montreal and Québec City has been widening. To the missing dishes—Montreal, worldly, Québec, cozy, Montreal, cosmopolitan, Québec, European, Montreal into making money, Québec into making laws—we can add Montreal, progressive, Québec, conservative.

Not good news for the PQ—which faded third, behind the ADQ, in half of the 12 ridings in the region—and perplexing



Stock-jack Filion has been morphing into an anti-targeted Rush Limbaugh-type character.

The new consensus five years has some people worried—such as Québec City's outgoing Mayor Jean Paul L'Allier. L'Allier has helped make his city, whose downtown core used to house a tax-bolted tenement district, more lush. Now, thanks to an enlightened approach to urban renewal that has won leaders in Europe and the United States, it's coming with a students, shoppers and high-tech workers who meet in new restaurants, bars and lavish parks. L'Allier, 66, thinks the *let's X* conservative revolt is anything but enlightened. "It's absurd," he says. "What worries me most is there is nothing behind it, no vision, no culture, no

project. It is more like consensus, a participating healthy organism."

Maybe that kind of view was to be expected from one of the old guard, a man of classical education, who was a Liberal cabinet minister in the 1970s and became a conservative following the collapse of the March-Lake record. But there's more to L'Allier's words as he contemplates what has been—and what may come. "Québec City is not very big, but the population is quite homogeneous, so, yes, conservatism tends to move better locally, and the public tends to imitate faster here than in a large, complex city like Montreal," he notes. "The threads of dissent and confirmation have been sewn, and they seem to have found fertile soil. Who knows the future? Maybe the Quiet Revolution will have been just a breath first—maybe, in the end, we will have done all that for nothing. I don't know."

I ask him if it's still a secession. He chuckles and says, "Well, let's say I am more like a dormant volcano in that regard."

Left-wing neo-cons have defined Québec's culture and politics since the 1970s. But nowadays, many of them, like L'Allier, seem to be running for cover. ■

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VICTORY DELAYED

The opposition won, but the old guard is not going gently

IT WAS SUPPOSED to be over—a new, legitimate presidential election, and victory, according to most indicators, for opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko. He did win, taking 52 per cent of the votes compared to 44 per cent for Viktor Yanukovich. But Yanukovich—who at week's end stepped down as prime minister—refused to accept the result. And so the Orange Revolution continued, with Yushchenko's supporters blocking any government heady action.

Restoring a page from the opposition's book, Yanukovich turned to the country's Supreme Court, which had nullified the fraudulent Nov. 21 vote and ordered the second runoff. Going wrong, the parliament—claiming that constitutional foreign observers—Yanukovich wanted the results declared invalid. The justices turned him down, so did the Central Election Commission, with which

Yanukovich had also lodged complaints that Yanukovich said further legal challenges would follow, although he held out little hope of success. Yushchenko,

meanwhile, prepared for governing—insisting late last week that he intended to sweep away as much of outgoing president Leonid Kuchma's regime as possible. Among his plans: replacing the 10 governors in eastern Ukraine who had threatened to form an autonomous region if the opposition won.

Yushchenko and his team are preparing for the business of governing



THE DVD WAR

Two tech titans are replaying the VHS vs. Betamax fight

AS VENUES GO, Las Vegas isn't a bad choice for the year's biggest video fight. This week, at the huge Consumer Electronics Show, two rival groups of tech and entertainment heavyweights will debut the next generation of DVDs. In one corner a Blu-ray, backed by Sony; in the other, Toshiba's HD DVD. Both formats promise more vibrant sound and video to take advantage of the new high-definition TV sets, massive storage space for inter-active features, and better copy-protection to ward off pirates. And while the promises are great, so are the stakes: the loser faces millions squandered on R&D, the winner gets

control of a US\$200-billion DVD hardware industry. It'll be a war as vicious as VHS all over again.

Technically, there isn't much difference between the two new formats. Both use the same lasers—instead of the red in conventional CDs and DVDs—to burn much larger quantities of data onto discs. And both sets of new players will accept old DVDs—although you'll have to restore your movie collection to see the enhancement. Yet despite their similarities, the formats are incompatible. In time, the market will edge one or the other, and as the CBS the two groups will stress how they're different—and better. "They're in a dead heat now," says Michael Goodman, an analyst with the Yankee Group. "At the show, they're going to try and capture the hearts and minds of retailers."

What are the respective prizes? The Blu-ray camp emphasizes capacity: a double-layer disc will hold about 50 GB of data—enough space for all three canonical *The Lord of the Rings* movies, commentaries and video games. The format has the backing of Dell and Hewlett-Packard, the world's two biggest PC makers. Toshiba, meanwhile, is allied with NEC and Sony, and claims

cheaper production costs as HD DVD's main advantage. Because the discs are the same physically in cutting DVDs, manufacturers will be able to use much of the same tools to press batches of the latest blockbuster.

But it seems the deciding factor will not be manufacturers, or even consumers, but Hollywood. Conventional wisdom suggests the format with the most movie titles will appeal to the most buyers and win the fight. "Momentum has been shifting back and forth," says Eddie Cline, an IDC Canada analyst. "For a while it looked as though HD DVD had the edge, but now it's tied once again." The only major studio left uncommitted is 20th Century Fox. Still, none of the superstars are lending, and the studios could switch allegiance at any time.

The worst case scenario, says Barker's Goodman, is if both formats hang around for years. Buyers would be reluctant to invest in a technology that could become obsolete soon. "The real show-down happens, and the economics of scale won't kick in because sales are split," he says. "That means higher prices longer."

Eventually, though, one format will come out on top, says Goodman, relegating its rival to the pile of obsolete technology. Until that winner emerges, however, you'd be smart to watch your DVD's. **D**

THE RIVALS' VITAL STATISTICS

	BLU-RAY	HD DVD
CAPACITY	25-50 GB	15-30 GB
HOLLYWOOD SUPPORT	Disney, Columbia, MGM	Paramount, Universal, Warner, New Line
RTA	2006	late 2006
ADVANTAGE	Computer-friendly format	Lower production costs



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BIG FIVE, SMALL PLAYERS

Our banks have missed the global express train. It's time to catch up.

CANADA'S FINANCIAL sector is afflicted with speculation about its future. The expected transformation has barely started, but even so many will raise a red flag at the sight of the industry's key elements, especially banking, which has failed spectacularly to establish the international clout it requires to compete in the 21st century. The banking community's realization that, having so far missed the global express train, it must catch up or surrender its claim to greatness is prompting unprecedented new thinking. If the banks can't break out of their comfortable but confining status quo, they're toast.

Until recently there was something vaguely un-Canadian about the financial sector going international: if our bankers displayed ocean energy and imagination abroad, they might be expected to behave with equal dash at home. That would never do, with their domestic monopolies guaranteed by legislation, they have done little more than coast their profits and state their service fees.

Suddenly, they're in a fight and fight mode, desperately searching to secure their future by expanding outside Canada's borders, mainly into the bustling U.S. market, where the mega-banks have turned themselves into giant fiscal ecosystems that defy the confining boundaries traditional to their trade. Money flows are no longer tied to the exchange of tangible goods and services, but to the imperious money mows of wealth and leverage that determine global markets.

In Canada, we still regard the chairman of the Big Five as corporate titan, on a world scale they're giants, hardly considered serious players. Their shared stock of the 49th is dismal. "With the possible exception of the Bank of Nova Scotia's foray into Mexico, the Canadian banks' international strategies have been incoherent in intent, direction and a protection racket for Big Street's closed club." So concludes York University's Schulich School of Business professors Charles McMillan and James Garneau in a tough chapter written for the revised edition of *Canada and Globalization: The New World*



D'Alessandro with revolutionized a more-clerical colleague

Financial Order, being published this spring. "It is very difficult that

gives the Canadian banks' political-financial performance, their failed efforts in the U.S. market and a growing list of possible scandals, Canadian firms like Manulife Financial Corp. and Power Corporation of Canada have become global superstars. The world is increasingly a single online system. Financial services is the biggest industry, larger than oil, auto and consumer electronics combined."

The only sensible approach to this paragraph written for the revised edition of *Canada and Globalization*, is to reduce the Big Five to a Big Three, so that we

create our own banking superstars, with the most likely merger being the Bank of Montreal with the Bank of Nova Scotia, while the Toronto Dominion Bank joins the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce out of necessity. That would leave the Royal Bank of Canada in splendid isolation, which is a no intention of occupying.

The bankers are still regularly flying to Ottawa, trying to persuade the current finance minister to block the external nationalization of their industry. But they know that the cat's out and won't move on the issue, since Paul Martin, who turned down the appeal campaign of Canadian banks in 1996 (when the Liberals had a solid majority), now co-

opies the Prime Minister's Office with a shaky minority. It's not about to rule: having to move out of 34 Sussex, just to please the Canadian Bankers Association.

Faced with this insurmountable obstacle, the banks have come up with what they believe would be a more sensible—and more double-solution. Their strategy has been set: to sidestep that the next revision of the Bank Act, due in 2006, permits cross-pillar mergers that would allow, to pick a random example, the Royal and Manufacturers Life Insurance (Manulife) to marry and form a killer combo that would ideally fit the dimensions of the new global economy.

There have been no negotiations and all of the principals deny any intent, but the example isn't exactly random. The key element is expected to be a banker at all, but Dominic D'Alessandro, the savvy and ambitious head of Manulife, whose dynamic take-on politicians' imagination style has revolutionized a once sleepy enterprise into Canada's 21st-century template for aggressive, competitive initiative. His leadership of the galloping Manulife colossus, whose third-quarter earnings in 2004 were up 81 per cent from the previous year, compared with the Royal's 37-per-cent, year-over-year drop in net income during its fourth quarter. In that period the Royal lost \$175

THEY'RE now talking cross-pillar mergers. Imagine the killer combo of a bank and an insurance company

million on its U.S. operations, which originally involved a \$7-billion investment.

The link-up of the Royal and Manulife, if it happens, would become the set case on the cross-pillar fertilization process. As yet, no one knows whether it would be a genuine amalgamation, which rarely happens, merge in heaven and wars in hell, or an overnight takeover. D'Alessandro would have a personal reason for wanting to merge as the grand passage of any such deal. In 2001, when he was executive vice president, finance, at the Royal—once the youngest man—he was passed over for the bank's chairmanship in favour of John Dugan. An accountant who worked in Paris and the Middle East, D'Alessandro

CANADA'S BANKS ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Banker worldwide ranking by assets

1. Mizuho Financial Group (Japan)	\$1.47 trillion
2. Citigroup (U.S.)	\$1.44 trillion
3. WFG-Globe (France)	\$1.45 trillion
4. Royal Bank of Canada	\$580 billion
5. Bank of Nova Scotia	\$470 billion
6. Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	\$287 billion
7. Toronto-Dominion Bank	\$262 billion
8. Bank of Montreal	\$245 billion

Source: International Bankers Association, 2004. All figures are in U.S. dollars.

joined the bank in 1981 and rapidly climbed to prominent leader. When he didn't get the top job, he resigned and became CEO of Montreal's real-estate multinational Laurentian Bank, taking over Manulife in 1994. He has since demoralized the company, forcing its market capitalization from \$9 billion to \$44.5 billion, and expanded its activities in every continent. His greatest coup was his purchase last spring of Toronto's John Hancock Financial Services Inc., now a wholly owned subsidiary of Manulife.

Canada's banks are already active in most of the financial pillars. That includes automobile leasing, insurance and trust companies, which they have absorbed or put out of business, and especially investment banking, where they have taken over just about every big street business that matters. What sticks in their craw is that even though they can own insurance companies (the Royal, for example, owns in Canada's Top 10 in its life insurance underwritings), they cannot cross-sell such products. (In the U.S., the industry has been almost completely decapitated, allowing banks to sell insurance over their counters and wiping out the remaining difference between commercial and investment banking.)

Amalgamation of some kind is in the air, and this time the politicians may not be able to stop it. Bank of Canada governor David Dodge has hinted that scale does matter and that "efficiency must be the heart of the debate." In the end only two banks are safe from mergers: dole banks and sperm banks. The future of every other Canadian bank is on the table, open for bids. ☐

Peter C. Newman's column appears monthly at petercnewman.com

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IS ANYBODY THERE?

Modern life makes friends more important than ever—but a lot harder to find

LIKE MANY women I know, I used when I was younger that I'd never be like my mother. And like many of those women, I can see my mother looking back when I look in the mirror. There's a hairline that's high at the temples, a chronic case of the fidgets, you name it. But there's one crucial difference—in middle age I suddenly find myself writing, needing even to, to make some new friends.

Three years ago, we threw an 63rd birthday party for my dad. It was a small gathering, but in some ways an extraordinary one: eight couples, all married for 50 odd years, all

friends for nearly as long. They had a shared history of good times, bad jokes, and solar sailing one another's babies. Sure, there were shifting allegiances over the years, one four some being closer for awhile, then another. But there was always that core group, and this night there was a sense in the room of just how special it was. It would be the last time they were all together like that. In the early spring of 2003, my parents died just four weeks apart. They were mourned by these wonderful friends they'd known virtually their entire adult lives.

Maybe I'll be lucky—if I inherit my father's dreads. But right now I'm dangerously close to becoming a hermit. Oh, I have people with whom I can go to a movie or hang or some such. But my friend Barbara, if you have friends for a season, a season, or a life time. You expect those first two types to come and go, but the last group? One was transferred to Vancouver, another has a new man at the helm, and a new job and a new house out in the suburbs, and might as well be in Vancouver. And, a former de-facto-year Bay Street lawyer, and no less busy than she is a full-time soccer mom. A fourth friend's husband is gravely ill and it is only natural that I've dropped her on her list of priorities. Email and long-run long distance phone may make it easy to stay in touch with all of them, but there is no substitute for a little time, for just picking up the phone and saying, "Hey, let's grab a coffee."

Again, I can't help but think about my former disappearing world. After spending the first few years of their married life in Vancouver, they moved to Burnaby, B.C.,

my mother's hometown—and there they stayed for the next 55 years. They even kept the same phone number all that time (I pray whoever got it after I was recycled). While I've lived in Toronto for some time now, I'm not from here and neither are most of the people I know. And how long any of us will be here is anyone's guess. The single act of getting together has become an elaborate ritual, preceded by email planning when we'll talk on the phone to make our

HOW DOES one go about making new friends? These are muscles that have been allowed to atrophy.

plans. We set up a high date three months away, only to change it several times so that it's actually more like five months before we ever get together. My parents never had Depression, never needed them.

I'm hardly alone in my isolation. According to a study presented in June at the latest national Housing Conference in Toronto, Canadian spent 34 per cent of their spare time by themselves at home in 1993, a five per cent increase from 2006. In that same period, they spent slightly more time socializing with friends and family in each place as cafes and restaurants, but this did not make up for the overall decline in social contact. Still, knowing that major social and demographic forecasts are playing havoc is making me think any more. I feel as if I've placed

a gun to my forehead—Lance/Lar Loose, take your pick.

Part of that stems from the eroded positive threads held in our lives today. With family members sometimes thousands of miles away, nearly 40 per cent of marriages ending in divorce and individuals who live by themselves counting the forest growing type of household in Canada, friends for many people are de facto family. Popular culture reflects that change. Early on, we saw the Leave It to Beaver and Father Knows Best were all about family life. On *The Dick Van Dyke Show* in the '60s, the star goofed around on the job with his co-workers, but his family remained central. A decade later, the actor who'd played his wife would star in her own program, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. Now she was a single career woman whose co-workers stood in for friends and family. By the time *Friends* came along in the '90s, well, the tale pretty much says it all.

The flip side is it's almost impossible to find positive images of solo individuals. The Lone Ranger, for one thing, isn't "lone"—he has Tonto. *Spider-Man* is about as good as it gets—and that Peter Parker was a conflicted guy. No, the nearest instinct is to be suspicious of the free-lance, to loathe them even. Dr. Frankster's creepy aspect of a land—a trick. Quick, name the card! The character generally regarded as the first anti-hero in literature—was creating the Devil—a *Jack-in-the-box* in *Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment*, a loner. And of course, real life is worse. *The Unbearable Jefferies Deceiver*. Now there are some guys without friends.

Know that couples can feel isolated as well, especially when the only adults they talk to besides each other are so well versed as the parents of their kids' friends. Still, being single pretty much can me off from that world of complacency. In fact, it's hard to shake the notion that if I'm feeling abandoned, it's because that's what I deserve.



We're talking the long, dark season of the soul. After all, there are all these sets of occasion. They're not all terrible, the help offered too late to be genuinely useful. Not to mention the time of consolation, even if office was given where none was intended.

Still, blame even where deserved, is not productive. Better to move ahead, to make new friends. This is not just about writing more to look forward to on Friday night than the latest DVD (though, of course, that's part of it). Studies have repeatedly shown that those who are socially isolated have greater health problems and even die younger than those who are surrounded by friends and family.

The question is, in practical terms, does one go about making new friends? There

are muscles that have been allowed to atrophy over the years. When you're little, you can play all day with a kid whose name you've never heard. Later, school and even first jobs provide natural bonding grounds for friendships—they often shared experience to a group of people in relatively the same neighborhood. Much beyond that, though, and self-protection and preoccupation are established. People hardly have time for the friends they do have, let alone new ones.

There's little help to be found on the bookshelves. Mostly, there are self-help books for the weekend and most of their advice boils down to, "Don't stop when you're tired and even if you don't meet someone special, you'll make new friends and maybe they'll have a sibling or cousin they can introduce you

to." Making friends, it seems, is the means, not the end, no explanation necessary.

Any extroverts are probably wondering just what the problem is. But fellow introverts know just how hard it can be to be outgoing, to be friendly and relaxed in unfamiliar situations. I could draw on one of the skills I've acquired as a reporter, actually asking the sorts of questions that draw people out—but that would make a fool out of my life work.

For some, the holidays can be the loneliest time of the year. I'm fortunate that I do have family, however small, and that my friends remain home. There was a business to the season that was distracting. But now January is here, and I should make the effort to make new friends as if my life depended on it—because, in a way, it does. **B**



TO NEW HEIGHTS

Two Canadian transplant recipients set a record

ON DEC. 3, Sylvain Redard, a 36-year-old heart transplant recipient from Montreal, and Dave Smith, a 44-year-old kidney recipient from Edmonton, set world records for mountain climbing. It was, in many respects, a uniquely Canadian adventure: the two men had become friends representing Canada at athletic events for three

with transplanted organs. And Redard was becoming something of a legend in cardiology circles a year earlier—days after his transplant—he scaled Mont Blanc in France, along with his doctor, Michel White.

On this trip, Smith reached the 6,498-m summit of the Sagana volcano in western

Belize. Redard made it to the 6,120-m peak. Both were called "heights for kidney and heart recipients." Sponsored jointly by pharmaceutical giant Merck Frost Canada, the \$75,000 expedition was also unusual in that three of the six climbers were cardiologists—two of them long-term friends themselves—who seemed to be

doing as much for the camaraderie as the science. One of them, on her first big mountain, was Dr. Heather Ross, 42, a mountain-biking enthusiast and head of the heart transplant team at the University Health Network in Toronto. She spoke recently with *Maclean's* Senior Editor Robert Sheppard.

Wasn't this a pretty unusual relationship between doctors and patients?

The whole relationship in transplantation is different from your standard doctor-patient interaction. When a patient comes forward for transplant, we might see him every day for a pretransplant period while he waits for his transplant, then daily afterwards, then once or twice a week, then once every two weeks and so on. It's a recipe for a much closer doctor-patient relationship.

Having said that, you don't normally meet with your patients. So, you, this was unusual. That first day at base camp we did a small peak and we all started crying. It was just over 5,000 m. And I think we all thought for the first time: Well, we may actually die this. The bonding was amazing.

How demanding is Sagana?

It isn't a super-technical mountain. There was an 80-m section regarding fixed rope because of a 70 per cent incline. The first

I wouldn't expect every transplant recipient to climb mountains, but what we can take from this is that the possibility is there.

What do you learn scientifically?

There are three major things we're studying and we don't have all the answers. We are looking at oxygen in the blood, trying to determine if it's difficult in transplant recipients. And there don't seem to be such differences among any of the climbers. We are also testing blood for various other things, the levels of growth factors that can lead to thickening in the heart wall, which can be a sign of future problems in some patients. And we are looking at the heart rate response to exercise.

There's been a lot of scientific debate about whether immune system suppression, which transplant recipients need to accept the donated organ, can affect muscle, and one of the reasons some people don't get back to normal activity after transplant. Both Sylvain and Dave are on the same immunosuppressant drugs. The Sylvain heart response is blunted. Because of the transplant, he has no vagus nerve, which is what allows the heart to beat faster when the body demands it. Having Dave on, we thought, could tell us what's heart-related and what is a response to the drugs.



The climbing team at 5,000 m. From left to right: Heather Ross, Redard, Smith, Ross, White, Sebastian Blais.

Sylvain's performance surprised you?

He performed brilliantly. But he did get fatigued and at the end he started back because, on his way to summit, he had a major goal was to get home. He has five kids. And at 6,120 m, that was tough.

We all had our own issues. For myself, I had the worst headaches I've ever had in my life. That was altitude sickness. As much as I was profoundly disappointed because I wasn't feeling pretty strong, it would have been foolish to stop there.

What did you learn from Sylvain and Dave?

They were up every morning and they ate the day as gift. They make our every day. It isn't so much that these guys are amazing—they are—it's that they are ambassadors for what the potential is for those who get to receive donated organs.

A POLITICAL FOOTBALL

Canada's naval fleet was once the third largest on the high seas

BY JAN. 10, 1910, when Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier tabled his Naval Service Bill, the preliminary consensus that a year earlier had supported the "speedy organization of a Canadian naval service" no longer existed. Conservative opposition leader Robert Borden, worried by the growth of Germany's navy, criticized Laurier's legislation for retaining the right to decide when Canadian warships would serve with the Royal Navy and called, instead, for Canada to fund a British battleship. Meanwhile, others from both parties distrusted the German threat and believed that anything larger than the Fisheries Protection Service would arm Canada in England's wars. Still, Laurier had enough votes on May 4 to establish the Royal Canadian Navy, and for the rest of the century it would achieve great things—especially during the Second World War—before never escape being a political football.

During the First World War, the RCN was drawn a handful of ships to more than 100, including 12 Canadian-built, into submarine hunters that swept the seas at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, where convoys began the Atlantic crossing. The most audacious Canadian naval operation came when R.C. Premier Sir Richard McBride sent staffed to Seattle on the day war was declared to purchase two U.S.-built submarines that Chalmers had not yet paid for. Once acrossed over to the RCN, they paralleled the West Coast for German vessels in an attempt to neutralize U.S. ports. Later, they became the first British Empire submarines to transit the Panama Canal. In 1918, they broke out on one of the raids, overturning most of the crew.

The immediate post-war years saw ambitious plans to further bolster our forces at sea. But in the 1920s, Prime Minister Mackenzie King slashed the naval estimates 40 per cent to \$1.5 million, necessitating the scrapping of a cruiser and two ships. Worried that a century later, Rear Admiral Leonard Murray summed up Ottawa's attitude at the time: "They would be pleased if someone came up with a plan to take the whole navy out into the



Convoy escorts were the main wartime job

middle of the ocean and sink it without a trace." But as international tensions rose during the mid-1930s, King—who was an effective navy in a way to avoid having to raise a large navy—increased the estimates to \$4.6 million by 1938, enough to enter the war the next year with six relatively modern British-built destroyers and seven smaller ships.

The almost 100,000 men who joined the RCN during the Second World War may have dreamed of great battles like the sink-

ing of the Bismarck, but their main wartime mission—convoy escort—was more prosaic, if no less dangerous. Between 1939 and 1945, Canada lost 22 ships and nearly 1,000 men to enemy action while escorting some 25,000 merchant ships across the Atlantic. By 1945, Canada's navy was the world's third largest.

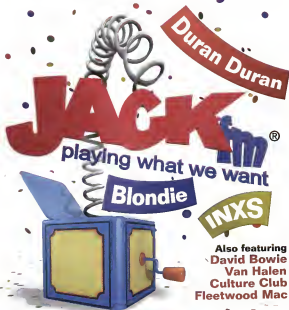
But within two years of VE Day, the RCN had mothballed nearly all its ships, leaving only four destroyers, two trawlers and a single fleet carrier. In 1950, despite lacking ships to adequately defend our coast, Ottawa sent

three destroyers to the UN "polar screen" in Korea. That December, a Canadian-led task force won decorations after sinking 30 km up the shallow Tado-kyo River as communist trapped UN units.

By 1958, as SALT Canada's NATO commitment, the government boosted the navy from a handful to 47 ships, including two aircraft carriers. But in the 1960s, political support for the RCN waned again, and 25 ships, including the old HMCS Bonaventure, were sold for scrap. "By the 1970s, the fleet was rusting out," says naval historian Marc Milner. "Gradually authorized its rebuilding in the late 1970s, but that was simply another instance of the boom and bust cycle that characterized Canadian defence spending." And now, in the wake of the late 20th-century tragedy when a sailor died last October in another submarine fire, Paul Martin must grapple with the perennial issue of whether to spend or scrap. □

WITHIN two years of VE Day, the navy had mothballed nearly all of its ships, leaving only seven vessels

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HAVANA FANTASIA

On a jury for Cuba's film festival, our critic reveals in a vibrant culture



IT WAS INSANE, hopping off to Cuba at the height of the holiday movie season. What was I thinking? I'd miss the advance screening of *Splash*! But I'd been invited to sit on a jury at Havana's Internat. Festival of New Latin American Cinema (Dec. 7-17). For years, my Colombian friend Ramiro Pardo—musician, filmmaker and programmer with Terremoto's film festival—had tried to drag me to the Havana festival. He went on about it as if it were a portal into a lost world, a Neverland of Latin culture. But I

was always too busy to go. Three years ago Ramiro died of cancer, at the age of 46. Now, finally, I know what he was talking about.

I'm in my room on the 22nd floor of the Habana Libre hotel—an ornament to American modernism that was erected as a grand new Hilton just before the Cuban revolution, then simply confiscated and rechristened. Fidel Castro and his guerrilla cohorts set up headquarters on the 22nd floor, directly

below me. That was 46 years ago. I try to imagine Fidel sitting in his fatigues in a room like mine, ordering a club sandwich from room service. It's 2 a.m., and I can't sleep. The walls are vibrating

with the bulldozer grind of a bus from the dozen floors up. Might as well check it out. Almost before I'm in the door, a caramel-blond clucking a pink cellphone chatters up in broken English. This young model of refinement says she's studying journalism and synchronized swimming, then politely affirms herself to me for \$100. I politely decline. Yet, Havana has too many hookers and too many cops, reminders that this place is no utopia, it's a poignant contradiction, a last outpost of Communist grandeur. Yet it also has one of the most vibrant cultures on the planet. I showed up as a film festival expecting movie movies, and found myself in the middle of one—an extraordinary musical.

On my first afternoon in town, I'm whisked off to an opening at La Granada, a Spanish colonial landmark on a deserted street. We climb a rattle staircase to a grand main of

marbled ceilings, mod of pillars and crumbling ochre walls. Paintings hang from clothes pegs on lines strung across the room. The painter is Jorge Perugorrin, a celebrated actor, and the building was a location for his best-known role—in Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's *Strawberry & Chocolate* (1994), the Oscar-nominated but not challenged Cuba's official taboo against homosexuality (the taboo has since eased). But I love the way of two

famous gay Europeans who once visited the festival, a filmmaker and fashion designer arrested at an underground rave, they spent a hard night in jail—apparently the highlight of their trip.)

In a corner, a bartender mixes mojitos, sniffing wads of fresh mint into plastic gloves. And a band begins to play—a jazz band of Cuba's hottest young musicians. The music isn't traditional jazz or salsa but an urban mix of pop, jazz and reggae, cut with influences of blues. Seguros take turns at the mike. The guy hand-drumming on a plywood beat box is one of Cuba's top concert pianists. The characterist woman on bass is Yusa, a black singer/guitarist with an inverted pyramid of Grace Jones hair who has toured Europe to rave reviews. I don't know them one, but soon this small crowd of Havana's cultural elite—musicians, actors, filmmakers, soap-opera stars—in a delirium of singing and dancing. Music pours out the open balcony into the soft lights of the street.

We tend to associate Havana with a time warp—the vintage bust of the Buena Vista Social Club, and the cartoon film cars that have been outmoded so many times they



look like ceramic sculptures. But this is the sound of a 21st-century Cuba. I ask Perugorrin about his paintings, which feature a lot of dark highways with shimmering white lines. "They represent Cuba as a crossroads," he says. "Now the roads are going just one way, but I live a time beyond the crossroads when they'll go in many directions."

Perugorrin is also a jury member at the film festival, which after 26 years remains the world's liveliest intersection of Latin American cinema. And it's still edited by the man who created it, Alfredo Garsón, the godfather of Cuban cinema and a close friend of Fidel. A pale, delicate man, he opens and closes the festival reading long speeches from a spooly pulpit at the back of the cinema, a suit jacket draped over his shoulders like a papal vestment. Garsón (no relation to Che) founded Cuba's state film studio, just three months after the revolution. Cinema has been a state sacrament here ever since. Among the premieres at this festival is

A POIGNANT
contradiction, Cuba is a
last Communist outpost
locked in a time capsule
of faded colonial grandeur

Amor Ciego, *The Invisible Man* (1994), a Brazilian documentary that tells the amazing story of 1964's *Joy Cuba* ("¡Am Cuba!"), an instrumental epic by Soviet director Mikhail Baklanov. Among just one for the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kabanov spent two years filming on the island. He was inspired by the young romance of a tropical revolution—and the opulence of hotels built as mafia playgrounds. With a story that swings from the erudite decadence of Batista's Havana to Castro's guerrilla assault, *Joy Cuba* may be the most lavish propaganda film ever made—a brazen fear of black-and-white cinema



BETWEEN HERE AND THERE

Saying hello to my new life in Canada meant a painful goodbye to India

I AM STARTING the New Year as a new Canadian. On Dec. 3, yet another rainy, grey Vancouver day, I, along with nearly 100 others at the same ceremony held in the citizenship and immigration office in downtown Vancouver, swore an oath of allegiance to the Queen and promised to abide by Canada's laws. In return, we can now vote, apply for government jobs and get Canadian passports. Then, standing there in my brocade sari and (absolutely loved, judging by the number of new Canadians in rain jackets and sweat shoes), I sang my most solemn version of O Canada. After months of sometimes anxious waiting for this moment, I felt simultaneously sad and elated.

Of course, I'm still an immigrant. South Asian, born-in-an-Canadian actor, and for agha, better—just like the other 16 per cent of Vancouverites (including many Chinese, Indians and Pakistanis) for whom citizenship was a matter of faith.

There's an inherent contradiction in becoming Canadian in traditional Indian clothes. I feel suddenly more accepted in Canada, yet unable or unwilling to loosen the eternal bonds linking me to my motherland. We first-generation immigrants are forever torn between here and there. On a good day, we could becomelively, then a bad day, well... I can say, however, that after five years of living in this country, it's home as much as any home can be if you've chosen to immigrate.

The ceremony took place several months after I had written the slightly depressing column ship coast. I can now place the Rockies and the Great Lakes where they belong on the map—and so, too, when I, probably wouldn't have bothered with some simple first coat to an off I won't be taking first off, the questions about Canadian politics and going right, with multiple choice answers, were my simple—some already so. For instance, approx (a), (b) and (c) for "If you didn't realize your 'Voter Information Card' were so ridiculous you could have no doubt through answer was (B) 'I'll tell Election Canada'." Still, I wonder, if one didn't have citizens took the test, would they all pass? And, if so, me

failed, would their citizenship be at stake?

The country's season of voting and elections makes it clear that the votes of new citizens are very important to the powers that be. We're expected to be less paid about the electoral process than the 3.8 million eligible voters who abstained from last June's federal election. Shouldn't there be some penalty for failing to exercise your vote as a Canadian? In my current eyes and optimistic state, I do want to do my part in the democracy. And just as happily,

with history books drifting into us the "result" of having been welcomed by the British for more than 200 years. Today, Indians are proud of being here and are terribly nationalistic about their culture, food, clothes and cartoonish brand of the English language.

Despite all my excitement about becoming Canadian, the terrible sadness of no longer belonging to India struck me sharply. It's almost as though I've replaced my birth parents with foster parents (even though they've proved to be better at parenting). For me, the analogy is doubly sharp because I really have left my aging parents behind in New Delhi to start this new life with my husband Abhi, who became a Canadian the same day I did, and our four-year-old son, who was born here.

Abhi and I chose to get away from the chaos that reigns in the country of our

birth. There, the hassles people live with mean even everyday activities require a huge effort. We were better off than most in India, but that in itself was not enough. Canada allows us a sense of individualism and offers a quality of life that India, with its teeming millions, could never accommodate. Now, however, I choose to think of myself—whether as mother, professional writer, book lover, amateur gardener or painter—or have the freedom to explore, discover and invent myself.

I'm grateful for the gentleness of finally being a citizen of this country. For this reason, to enjoy Stanley Park, the beautiful forests, the unblemished mountains and coastline as I remember Vancouver, and the amazing opportunities that exist, I gratefully accept the sovereignty of the Queen. I did voluntarily swear allegiance to you, my dear monarch, just for this day of becoming Canadian and enjoying the rest of my years in this land. ■

Sabita Mahajan is a freelance writer in Vancouver who will be celebrating new day soon. To comment: overtoyou@mac.com



BACKTALK

John Intini's Sentences 53 | Bestsellers List 53 | Money's Worth 55



Which of these funny shows will you vote off the network?

McIntosh Duff and Michael are willing to look foolish in their effort to survive

In CBC's *Getting Along* (Monday), Debra Mcintosh plays Ruby, a middle-aged 1960s vintage store—who's a bit like Debbie Reynolds. With Judy Garland's backing, Ruby's first job is to get so much right (though her very first scene is "I says Mcintosh, 'that she were a prettier lady, but I thought, 'Oh, Ruby, so good not to make fun of it'")

Mcintosh's unique and comical show, restoring her husband Colin Mcintosh as being launched with two other comedians this month. The CBC is asking viewers to weigh in before any are picked up for a full season. The dry-witted Abhi

Ego star's Peter Kelogian as a comic-strip writer inspired by the antics of his school friends, including Munching A (though he's a pure original), as Mary Mcintosh plays a well-oiled, multi-talented and owner of a wedding hall (and perfect performance service). All three pairs are completely different and Michael are completely different and Michael are completely different

Walter Ego, J.K. 1.1 p.m. *Getting Along* (Monday), J.K. 1.1 p.m. *Mcintosh, A. 1.1 p.m. *Mcintosh, A. 1.1 p.m.**

To comment: overtoyou@mac.com

BUZZ LIST

THE SUPERHERO

The road to the Super Bowl: The game and halftime star Paul McCartney gets set for an endless stream of poppy jokes.

WINTER WARRIORS

The office cruise says to be a good time in the Pacific of the Canadian (and the American) P.A. news, but has agreed to pay an episode and guest star on The Simpsons. Proof that home is still a Hollywood away.

CBC

Public television's first development to own take on Survivor.

THE COUNTRY

The Southwest and the Great Lakes are whipping up a spring season—your first fall show in 30 years.

THE MOVIE COMPANY

David Gail (the daughter, and all the best scenes in the show, to Taylor Grace light).

THE MOVIE COMPANY

David Gail (the daughter, and all the best scenes in the show, to Taylor Grace light).

THE MOVIE COMPANY

David Gail (the daughter, and all the best scenes in the show, to Taylor Grace light).

THE MOVIE COMPANY

**Films** | Capturing horror and heroism

holding a microscope (there's about 600 models—especially the ones that work best in collecting fish) of Endocottus in my possession. But Hotel Hanoi has his own cathedral story. It's based on the real-life ordeal of Paul Hensley (born **Chen Sheng**), the manager of a luxury hotel in Vietnam's capital who was arrested on a spurious charge of collaborating with the enemy to escape the 1976 evacuation. He tried to escape the 1976 evacuation. **Paul is Hui, but his wife, Taitian (Gloria Chen), is Tui—and therefore considered a "collaborator."** It is extraordinary that the bestselling books of Hui's wife, **Chen Sheng**, deliver a powerfully contained performance as an impeccable hostess who struggles to maintain decorum—always in a frayed white shirt and tie—while her captives begin to open the door. The key to his survival is, being an army general with six brothers of state, with order.

Shel in South Africa by Northern Irish director **Terry George**, the drama captures the horror of the genocide without graphic violence. The most harrowing image is when Paul drives onto a highway road and realizes he's surrounded by soldiers. The film also subtly conveys the quality of the tapeworms—which turn a blind eye on almost a million. And as a TV commentator, **Joachim Phoenix** excels in the finalization of a journalist trying to put Rwanda in the spotlight. But there are finer notes. As a *Cowboy Up* commander (partly based on **Samuel L. Jackson**), a slacker **Nick Nolte** brings through his scenes as if he'd just lost the war, but of some other movie and is trying to find his way back. And the film's intimate, almost poetic scenes of Rwanda—Paul finally has his moment—will need to wait the future, striving to achieve inspiration from a strong gaze. **Movie Review** focuses on one man's heroism, attempt to save his wife and family. In the end, we're left with a first-hand guide about genocide. **Dave Karger** in *Journalism*

Television *Life Is a Carnival*

Toronto filmmaker **Jeremy Podawa** (right, in *Race to 10*) is currently retooling an adaptation of the Garth riskier bestseller *Fugitive Pieces* by **Anne Michaels**—but for the past five years, he's been moonlighting at HBO, as a TV director. Podawa talks about working on three of the network's top shows.

CARNIVORE

Season 2 starts on The Movie Network and Movie Central Jan. 30: "Pondra shows us TV as almost without of at this point—and it is so interesting to be working in this period, the 1930s, with references from Edward Hopper paintings to *Derwent* gauge photographs to things like *The Draper of Death*."

2002

(premiered in 2015) "It's about ancient Rome and Julius Caesar's return after the conquest of Gaul. We had huge sets and were shooting in Cinecittà, where Fellini's movies were made and *Gangs of New York* was made; it was like a little movie—a big movie actually. One episode was triple the budget of the last feature."

SIX FEET UNDER

laureately shouting its fifth-and-final season. "It probably has the most complex script in terms of comedy and drama. Things that are very heartfelt and things that are outrageously funny. It also has the biggest tonal range of any of the shows—and probably the strongest cast in television."

S. P. ANDERSON, JR.

SOCCER STAR DAVID BECKHAM and his wife Victoria spent a reported \$2.1 million on a post-Beckham bash for their sons.

Games | Rise of the machines

Is it the best way to protect the galaxy from impending destruction? The developers of *StarCraft* 2's Lower Wolf (Wolfe), the slick adaptation of the role-playing game *BattleTech*—think giant, heavily armed machines just might do the trick. In the game, players assume the role of a futuristic soldier who pilots 120 robots. Your mission: hunt down and stop an invading army of equally equipped iron giants from taking over the galaxy. When all the pieces

Mitchell said I felt rushed to shelves. *Lost World* is much improved—with better graphics, richer storytelling and a new multi-player, third-style game mode. *Lost World* is for those who've outgrown their Transformers collection.

DENISE CRENSHAW



Jennifer Podemski finishes John Intini's sentences

television producer **Jennifer Pedrick** is determined to make *Missing Fish* as close to reality as possible—focusing key economic issues on the many troubling issues facing Native Canadians. The show—starting on Jan. 8 on APTN, and airing on Showcase this spring—is the first Canadian drama created by an aboriginal writer. Pedrick, 31, whose younger sisters **Tamara** and **Sarah** are also small-screen regulars, recently finished *Whisper*, a second film **John Inili's** sonnet.

WHEN I WAS A KID I USED TO BELIEVE...
That there was no crime in Vancouver. I thought it was the safest place on

swims, like that was all shattered after I moved there when I was six and one of the kids in my class was abducted by my favourite character from DEGRADED JUVENIL HIGH - was Celine. She always had the coolest clothes. PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET UNDERSTAND Nice Krippees how do they get them to snap, crackle and pop? YES! EVENTUALLY until you've moved 1 800 Feet above the jungle floor on Central Avenue from the mess to a cable. And I'm accused to death of heights

FOR MORE "JOHN INTINTS SENTENCES" VISIT WWW.MACLELLAN.CO.UK/1960PLA



CONFIDENTIAL
FOUO (MAY)

3. **Phyllis Diller**
March 15, 1915
McDonald's
Dance 100
Owl 100
Owl 100

2000 TV series
The first, which was based on a W. P. Kinsella novel.
1. Guest stars on
celebrity website like, there
can happen at The
New Generation

Books | The Civil War and the birth of Canada

The *Templeton Canadian History of Canada and the United States* will continue now to Hites during the American Civil War, which lasted from 1861 to 1865 in Canada. The book is a historical study of the war's effects in Canada. More than 20,000 Canadians fought on the war, mostly for the North, enticed by \$200-a-month bounties or lured by American promises of land. The war cost Canada some \$200,000, 0.5% of the country's income. It was also a time of social upheaval, as the war's effects were felt in the North. The North's side of the war was a time of social upheaval, as the war's effects were felt in the North. The North's side of the war was a time of social upheaval, as the war's effects were felt in the North.



CANADIANS IN
THE CIVIL WAR
Claire May
and Arthur
134-35

Best Sellers

Election

[illegible]

Non-fiction

1. EARL, THOMAS AND LARSEN, LYNN DANA (2)	1
2. THE MONTGOMERY-CHALICE BANQUET, CHALICE DAY (2)	2
3. FRY, JANE (1)	3
4. CHURCHILL, POLLY ANN, 1864-1940 (2)	4
5. HORN, R. MAGGIE, 1874-1940 (2)	5
6. FROST, J. H. (1)	6
7. FRY, JANE (1)	7
8. HILL, J. H. (1)	8
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¹ www.who.int
² www.un.org

AMERICA ONLINE, the world's largest Internet service provider, reported the third quarter was down 75 per cent on 1994.

Shanda Deziel | ON POP CULTURE



'Life lessons' that really aren't

Too many people blur the line between reality and what happens on television

THE FIRST TIME I remember a TV show gliss into my real life, it was *Survivor*. My grandparents and I were big fans of *Dallas*, and they bought me a kid-sized *T-shirt* with "I shot J.K." printed on it. It scared everyone in our small town had seen the *diff*hanger, and got a link out of that article of clothing. I wore it tensely every day for an entire summer until it was revealed that Kristin, J.K.'s former in-law, had actually done the deed. After that, I was no longer a suspect—and the shirt was in the dust.

We're all guilty of peering ourselves in our favorite shows, picking which *Friends* character you most resemble—hell, maybe you even got "the *Bat*thel" haircut. But some people just don't handle these television consumption responsibly—hence the *flourishing* MTV reality show *I Hate a Famous Fan*, where participants are surgically altered to resemble Brad Pitt, J. Lo or other celebrities. And while I've found it helpful to imagine I'm an *The Amazing Race* racer whenever I've got to perform a task that makes me nervous, not much relief from applying the "idiot" and "infallible" glossed from TV

horror town, I found that the same conceit that indulged my *Dallas* fantasy was again blurring the lines of TV and reality—only this time it wasn't for a laugh. In a tragic event last spring, a local woman went missing and was found dead a few days later. The police ruled it a homicide, but have yet to make an arrest. It's human nature for people to speculate on what may have happened. But thanks to our pop culture obsession, the town is now populated with significant number of amateur detectives, forensic experts, coroners and trial lawyers who have already put the case to bed—with the skulls they picked up from *MYPO* *Blair*, *CSI*, *Crossing Jordan* and *Law & Order*. Residents can't believe it's taking the real police so long to realize what they deduced in only a few days, and what *Dr. Andy* *Sopranos* would have figured out before the first commercial break.

Now, if I can play amateur analyst—after all, I've learned a lot from *The Sopranos* *Dr. Melfi*—I would say these well-intentioned folk are simply trying to process something scary, strange, and looking for ways to be useful in a



To connect shanda.deziel@mediatoday.com

Tech | It's like a bath for your brush

We clean dishes and clothes after each use, but when it comes to toothbrushes—plaque-fighters for bacteria—we use the same one over and over for weeks, even months, before replacing it. Now, Philips Sonicare's world-renowned designer—this came to the rescue with the V10 light toothbrush cleaner and cleaner. It comes equipped with a germicidal UV light that promises to kill up to 99.9 per cent of the bacteria on your brush. And it doubles as art—a sort of futuristic, glowing pot for your bathroom counter. **LIAMNE GEORGE**

Style | Tween up your room

Thanks to their ever-growing purchasing power, teens now have designer clothes, shoes and cosmetics marketed just to them. There's even a junior edition of *Life*. So it was only a matter of time before companies started hawkling youthful home-decor items. Recently, Pottery Barn launched *Fitnes* (www.potterybarn.com), which sells everything from fun-colored beanbag chairs to funky wall art. At www.girlslovespotterybarn.com, teens can buy brightly colored desk accessories and fashionable purple alarm clocks. And the U.S. clean style line (www.uscleanstyle.com) sells such girly items as the feathered and braided "diva pendant lamp." **RYAN HUNTER** | *Tween chat?* **U.S.**

Money's Worth | Organic skin care

Moisturizing au naturel

It's all about skin care—like fine 90s sluffer accessories—these days for women and men alike. Skin care sales are booming, but for eco-aware consumers—an ever-expanding category—new organic brands are making the biggest impression. Between 2002 and 2003, the category made an impressive 80-per-cent jump in sales. "Generally speaking, organic skin care tends to be made with better ingredients," explains J. B. Bender, co-founder of www.alterraorganics.com, a Canadian online organic cosmetics store. These products contain herbs, oils and juices produced without synthetic pesticides, fertilizers or genetically modified ingredients. In other words, they're better for the environment, and they'll leave less chemical residue on your skin. And they're also just a bit more expensive than your average skin-care product. We tested four organic moisturizers to determine which ones are worth the premium. **KAREN MARLEY**



OUR PICK: Juice's aloe, jojoba and the most lush, juicy sweet oil carries the flower and, meaning it's certified organic. And besides, it's Canadian.

THE VERDICT: Being so expensive in shops, organic skin creams are definitely luxury items. (Interestingly few in definition, too.) They're clean, natural, gentle and refreshing, though—in fact, find that those products only claim to moisturize, not miraculously make you look 20 years younger.



What's in store

Pharmacia's pure Aloe Vera and Aloe Vera cream essential oils extracted from organic plants. Available in hand cream, shaving foam, hair conditioning cream or baby lotion. **JOHN J. JONES**

AVON ORGANICS PREFERRED HAND & BODY LOTION	JUICE BEAUTY AROMATIZING RECOVERY MOISTURIZER	ALTEIRA ORGANICS RECOVERY GEL	DRUCK KARITE BALANCING MOISTURIZING LOTION
PRICE \$14.99 for 300 ml (3.75 fl. oz.)	PRICE \$18 for 30 ml (1.06 fl. oz.)	PRICE \$18 for 30 ml (1.06 fl. oz.)	PRICE \$17.99 for 200 ml (7.05 fl. oz.)
COMPANY A large, California-based company with two brands of products. Packaging designed with the natural glow in mind.	COMPANY California-based company. Ingredients are all natural and organic. Packaging designed with the natural glow in mind.	COMPANY A little company that grew what began as a family farm in southern California. It has a wide variety of products. The line of cosmetics is based on botanicals and essential oils.	COMPANY This 25-year-old Quebec-based company produces the world's largest collection of organic skin care products. The line of cosmetics is based on botanicals and essential oils.
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TRACTION | PERFORMANCE
xDrive

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